

KINGS MOUNTAIN MIRROR-HERALD

15¢

"Cleveland County's Modern Newsweekly"

KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA 28086 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1975

By Union Members

Police Chief Is Being Sued

By TOM McINTYRE
Editor, Mirror-Herald

Kings Mountain Police Chief William Roper and one of his patrolmen have been named in a \$80,000 lawsuit filed in district court by former employees of Beunit Trucking Co.

The lawsuit claims the employees' rights. It claims that Beunit "hired the entire Kings Mountain Police force" to prevent a strike by Teamsters Local No. 71; that the men were told they would be arrested if they struck; and that the police would shoot any strikers and mechanics "making trouble" around the terminal.

Chief Roper told The Mirror-Herald "The accusations made by those people are completely false. We were never called to the terminal. I was not even aware there were any strikers at the Beunit terminal until I read it in the paper."

Roper said he was not aware his name and that of Burton had been mentioned in connection with the Beunit situation until he was interviewed with papers Tuesday.

The only contact I've ever had personally with Mr. (William) Nolen (manager of corporate trucking for Beunit) was when he came to ask about hiring several officers to act as night watchmen at the terminal during their off-duty hours," Roper said. "This was around Labor Day."

Roper said Patrolmen Julius Burton, Bill Nolen and reserve officer Phil Witherspoon (Lt. Bob Hayes had "moonlighted" once as night watchmen at the terminal.

These men were off-duty," Roper said. "They drove their own personal cars to the job. There has never been a patrol car called to the terminal for any reason since it opened here a few months ago."

Nolen, contacted at his office on Charles St., verified the comments made by Chief Roper Wednesday morning. Nolen and Frank Hood, manager of the Beunit terminal, located at 607 Charles St., were also named in the lawsuit.

"I do not have the authority to make any comment on the situation other than to say the comments made by Chief Roper are true," Nolen said. "As far as the labor dispute between the drivers and mechanics and Beunit, I cannot make comment."

Nolen said he had no idea when the suit would be brought to court.

"This has caused patrolmen Burton, myself and the city police embarrassment and harassment," Roper said. "And the thing we're accused of doing are entirely false."

The lawsuit, filed in Shelby District Court by a Charlotte attorney, asks that all intimidation by the company and police be stopped and that each of the 44 men be awarded \$10,000 compensatory and \$10,000 punitive damages, or a total of \$20,000 each.

The men named on the lawsuit have not worked since Sept. 7. They claim they were locked out at Beunit after they rejected by a 43-0 vote a new contract offered by the company. The old contract expired at midnight Aug. 31. Although the contract had expired the men stayed on until Sept. 7 to vote on a new contract and expected to continue working while negotiations continued.

The former Beunit employees have been denied state unemployment pay because such pay is not possible if the lack of work results from a labor dispute. This ruling has been appealed and hearing is set for Nov. 18 in Raleigh.

The names on the lawsuit include Charles Fortenberry, Lawrence Justice, Lamar Usery, Howard Gribble, Tro Herron, Bob Stamey, Don Williams and J. J. Wilson, who say they are representing the others.

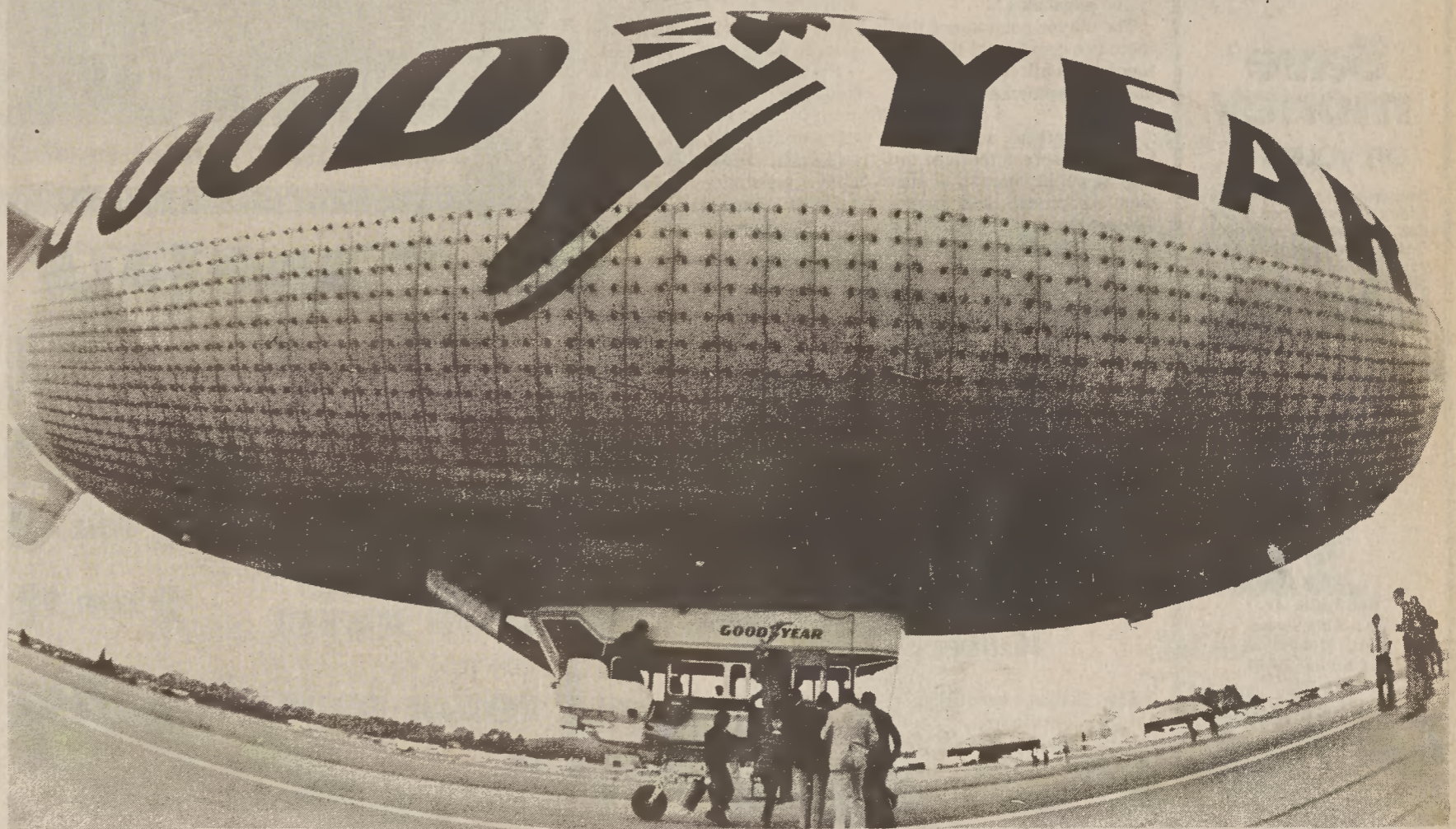


Photo By Tom McIntyre

Boarding The Blimp

Mayor John Henry Moss (waving in cabin doorway) boarded the Goodyear blimp for a short ride Tuesday afternoon at Gastonia Municipal Airport. The Goodyear blimp was in the Gaston-Cleveland counties area Tuesday and Wednesday during a nationwide promotional tour for the Goodyear Co.

Dignitaries from the two counties were issued special invitations to ride the blimp. Tuesday night the blimp was seen over Gaston County displaying in lights, messages and colorful designs.

For 78-Car Parking Lot

City To Purchase Land

By TOM McINTYRE
Editor, Mirror-Herald

The city commissioners agreed Monday night to purchase the property off Cherokee St. adjacent to 18 business firms to be used for a 78-car parking lot.

The price is \$61,400 and bids for development of the free municipal parking lot will be received at 2 p. m., Mon., Dec. 1 at city hall.

Mayor John H. Moss said, "The parking lot is part of the overall downtown improvement plan and the purchase and development costs of the land as a free parking lot will

be 100 percent funded under the city's community development funding."

City Engineer Dennis Fox gave commissioners large detailed drawings of the proposed style for construction of the lot and gave them an update on information.

"I have only one written response to the letter we sent out," Fox said, "but there was verbal response from the approximately 18 businessmen or land owners involved."

Fox said there are five areas of response from the merchants; removable pavers to cover the gas, water and electrical lines, all of which

will be underground in the lot, openings in the walkways for the planting of shrubs or trees, suitable lighting, relocation of the Dempsey Dumpster trash containers and relief in the grading problems.

In the revised drawing Fox indicated the three large trash containers, which were located at the side of the lot nearest the business houses, can be located on the Cherokee St. side of the lot and hidden by a concrete block screening wall. The new drawing indicates five parking spaces to be used for the trash containers.

Fox said he would still recommend use of concrete walks instead of the pavers to cover the utilities because "this will be in the area where pedestrians will walk. It will also be adjacent to the loading and unloading areas."

Fox said his recommendation about openings in the sidewalks is to oppose that. "We will only have six feet in width for walks and to take up any of that with trees or shrubs would not leave much area for pedestrians," he said.

The engineer said the lighting would be handled by Southeastern Engineering Co.

As for item five, grading, Fox said the area behind Griffin Drug and Grayson's Jewelry shows a four and six

feet, respectively, rise above the existing grade level of the parking lot.

"In the case of Griffin Drug we can work a compromise," Fox said, "but there is no way we can compensate for the six foot rise behind Grayson's Jewelry."

Fox said the grade level in the center of the parking lot would have to be lowered and curbing and guttering be constructed behind the buildings facing Battleground Ave. This

would take care of the surface drainage, which is at present a problem. The surface water would run down to the storm drains on Cherokee St.

Before the commissioners voted, James Amos of district five, asked if the gas, water and electrical work would be done prior to the construction of the parking lot.

Amos was told Southeastern Engineering already had the

(Please Turn To Page 2A)

Recounts Conducted But Winners Remain Same

Even though the Kings Mountain Elections Board granted requests for recounts in two of the six commissioner races and spent three hours recounting the Nov. 4 runoff election ballots, the final outcome did not change the names of the winners.

Candidates Ray Cline, district one, and James Dickey, district six, wrote the local elections board on Wed., Nov. 5 requesting ballot recounts based on the close count in the Nov. 4 election. Cline was six votes behind James Childers and Dickey was 29 behind Fred Wright in the Nov. 4 count.

Following the three-hour session at city hall the final count added one vote each to both Dickey and Wright's totals, but the 29 vote spread was still there. Childers' final tally showed he had defeated Cline by 10 instead of six votes.

The official canvass of votes was held at 11 a. m. Thurs., Nov. 6 at city hall and the abstract was signed and turned over to Mayor John H. Moss. Monday night the mayor read the canvass and the board approved it for the record.

The official vote tally reads as follows: James Childers: East 422—West 565—total 987

The abstract certified that Mayor Moss, with 1,965 votes on Oct. 7, will serve a four-year term. Also to serve four year terms as commissioners are James Childers, district one; Corbet Nicholson, district three; and Norman King, district four. Serving two year commissioner terms will be Humes Houston, district two; Bill Grissom, district five; and Fred Wright Jr., district six.

The abstract shows a total vote for all candidates of 11,675; in East KM—5,108 and West—6,567.

OFFICIAL VOTE NOV. 4

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------|--|
| DISTRICT ONE: | | | |
| James Childers: EKM 422, WKM 565 | Total | 987 | |
| Ray Cline: EKM 437, WKM 540 | Total | 977 | |
| DISTRICT TWO: | | | |
| W. S. Biddix: EKM 277, WKM 420 | Total | 697 | |
| Humes Houston: EKM 576, WKM 681 | Total | 1257 | |
| DISTRICT THREE: | | | |
| James Guyton: EKM 260, WKM 337 | Total | 597 | |
| Corbet Nicholson: EKM 587, WKM 748 | Total | 1335 | |
| DISTRICT FOUR: | | | |
| Norman King: EKM 541, WKM 648 | Total | 1189 | |
| Don McAbee: EKM 309, WKM 446 | Total | 755 | |
| DISTRICT FIVE: | | | |
| James E. Amos: EKM 410, WKM 465 | Total | 875 | |
| Bill Grissom: EKM 439, WKM 616 | Total | 1055 | |
| DISTRICT SIX: | | | |
| James J. Dickey: EKM 392, WKM 569 | Total | 961 | |
| Fred J. Wright Jr.: EKM 458, WKM 532 | Total | 990 | |



Photo By Tom McIntyre

TERMATH — Bob Elliott, chaplain for Grove VFD, begins clearing away the wreckage of the I-85 bridge over Hwy. 29 about a mile east of the Kings Mountain city limits Monday morning. The wrecked truck in the

background was being dragged away following the police investigation. The truck cab was gutted by fire, but the driver escaped with a minor cut on his head.

Firemen To Sponsor Rummage Sale Saturday

Kings Mountain firemen will sponsor a big rummage sale and flea market Saturday.

Used clothing, furniture and assorted items will be on display in the parking area across from the former First Union National Bank building on Mountain and Battleground.

Meantime, firemen were sending out the S.O.S. to all

Kings Mountain citizens who have items to donate to call the fire department and a member of the department will pick up the items.

All proceeds are earmarked for the Fire Department Museum Building to be erected on Cleveland Ave.

Firemen heading up the benefit include Fire Chief Gene Tignor, Charles (Pete) Peterson, and Jerry White.

The big sale starts at 9 a. m.

Tractor-Trailer Rig Flips, Burns On I-85

Jerome Jensen, a driver for MW Distributors of Rocky Mount, Va., counted himself a lucky man early Wednesday morning when his tractor-trailer rig flipped and burned just east of Kings Mountain.

Gaston County Rural Police officer G. P. Demetriades said he responded to the call at 5:37 a. m. Wednesday at the I-85 bridge over Hwy. 29 about a mile east of the Kings Mountain city limits.

"Apparently, the driver lost control of the truck just before he reached the bridge," Demetriades told The Mirror-Herald. "He hit the guard rail and the truck began to tip over coming to rest on its right side in the middle of the bridge."

Jensen was taken to Gaston Memorial Hospital for treatment of a cut on his head and released.

Members of the Chapel Grove Volunteer Fire Department also responded to the accident and fought the burning truck cab and trailer blaze for almost an hour before extinguishing the flames.

Firefighter William Foy commented, "I don't see how the driver got out of this thing alive."

The cab was completely destroyed by the fire. The trailer was damaged in the crash and from the intense gasoline-fed flames.

Wreckers from City Wrecker Service of Gastonia

were called to the scene to drag the truck from the bridge, get it back on the wheels and haul it away.

Traffic was rerouted onto the Kings Mountain bypass for almost three hours while the bridge was blocked by the wreckage.

Officer Demetriades said, "As far as we know the one vehicle is all that was involved in the accident . . . unless we lift the truck and find a car smashed beneath it."

There was no car beneath the mangled truck.

The truck cargo, wood work, was damaged, but the investigating officer said it would be awhile before an estimate of the extent of damage could be determined.